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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/554,631	10/25/2005	Roald T. Lokken	2003UR027	9176
7590 Gerald D Malpass Jr ExxonMobil Upstream Research Company Corp Urc SW348 PO Box 2189 Houston, TX 77252-2189				
EXAMINER				
MAYO, TARAL				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3671				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/15/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/554,631

Applicant(s)

LOKKEN ET AL.

Examiner

TARA MAYO-PINNOCK

Art Unit

3671

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 January 2009.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 October 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1 through 3, 6 through 19 and 21 through 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horton, III (U.S. Patent No. 5,722,797) in view of Meyer-Haake (U.S. Patent No. 4,217,848).

Horton, III '797, as best seen in Figure 1, shows a floating spar structure (10) attached to a heave plate (30), said floating structure including a deck (34). Horton, III '797 discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Horton, III '797 fails to teach the step of vertically positioning the floating structure with the heave plate along a common vertical axis.

Meyer-Haake '848 teaches a method of installing a floating installation wherein a plate (12) is structurally attached to a floating structure (16) at an offshore site (see Figs. 1-5d) along a common vertical axis. It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method disclosed by Horton, III '797 such that it would include the step of vertically positioning the floating structure with the heave plate along a common vertical axis as suggested by Meyer-Haake '848 to reduce the complication and costs involved in assembling the structure on land and then transporting the same to an offshore site.

4. Claims 4, 5 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horton, III (U.S. Patent No. 5,722,797) in view of Meyer-Haake (U.S. Patent No. 4,217,848) as applied to claim 3 above, and further in view of Haselton (U.S. Patent No. 3,986,471).

The combination of Horton, III '797 and Meyer-Haake '848 fails to teach a variable buoyancy heave plate.

Haselton '471 teaches a variable buoyancy heave plate (26). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the method and structure taught by the combination of Horton, III '797 and Meyer-Haake '848 such that at least one of the heave plates would be of the variable buoyancy type as taught by Haselton '471 to include means for controlling the heave, pitch and roll of the structure.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 08 January 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that Meyer-Haake '848 fails to teach a heave plate, the Examiner notes Applicant's attempt to argue the references individually. One cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). Specifically, Applicant must consider the combination of teachings by Horton, III '797 and Meyer-Haake '848 as set forth in the final rejection of the claims.

In response to applicant's argument that Meyer-Haake '848 is nonanalogous art, it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Meyer-Haake '848 relates to the assembly of a marine structure offshore and, thus, directly related to Applicant's field of endeavor.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TARA MAYO-PINNOCK whose telephone number is (571)272-6992. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on 571-272-6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/TARA MAYO-PINNOCK/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3671

Application/Control Number: 10/554,631
Art Unit: 3671

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